

How Do I Balance It All?

Lesson 01 of the series “Helpline: Answers to Your Toughest Parenting Questions.”

A. If we’re going to balance the challenges of parenting, we need to learn to manage our time.

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NASB77)

Note: We’ve all been given the same amount of time each day, but some of us manage it better than others.

1. We can routinely evaluate our lifestyles and family schedules.

“Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves....”

Romans 12:3 (NLT)

- Keep a record of how you use your time for a week.
- Eliminate at least one time-wasting activity. (Most people spend at least one hour/day on activities that can be eliminated.) “Everything is permissible”--but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible”--but not everything is constructive.” 1 Corinthians 10:23 (NIV)
- Look for ways to consolidate tasks or do things more efficiently.

2. We can pray.

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations... Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Psalm 90:1,12 (NIV)

Note: God has given us enough time to accomplish His will. “...after David had done the will of God in his own generation, he died and was buried with his ancestors....” Acts 13:36 (NLT)

If we don’t have enough time, we can ask ourselves three questions:

- Am I doing things God *never* intended me to do?
- Am I *not* doing what I know God wants me to do?
- Is there a better way to accomplish what God wants me to do?

3. We can get help.

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed... A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT)

- Delegate chores. Give everyone in the family a job!
- Join a connect group. “Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives.” Colossians 3:16 (NLT)
- Read parenting books / listen to podcasts.
- Ask godly friends to spend time with your children.

B. If we’re going to balance the challenges of parenting, we need to prioritize relationships and schedule time for them.

1. Scheduling time with God comes first.

“‘You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.” Matthew 22:37 (NLT)

- Schedule daily personal devotional time.
- Schedule family devotions.
- Schedule weekly worship together with other believers.

Note: If we put God first, He will help us with everything else. “...your Father already knows your needs. He will give you all you need from day to day if you make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.” (Luke 12:30-31 NLT)

2. Scheduling time with our spouses comes second.

“The man who finds a wife finds a treasure and receives favor from the LORD.”

Proverbs 18:22 (NLT)

“Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’ And he said, ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.” Matthew 19:4-6 (NLT)

- Schedule date nights.
- Schedule weekends away without the kids.
- Schedule time to talk, plan and pray.

3. Scheduling time with our kids comes third.

“Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him. Children born to a young man are like sharp arrows in a warrior’s hands. How happy is the man whose quiver is full of them!”

Psalm 127:3-5 (NLT)

- Schedule family meal times (no TV, computers or cell phones).
- Limit the number of outside activities in which our kids participate. “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12:2 (NLT)
- Schedule individual time with each child.

“How happy are those who fear the LORD-- all who follow his ways! You will enjoy the fruit of your labor. How happy you will be! How rich your life! Your wife will be like a fruitful vine, flourishing within your home. And look at all those children! There they sit around your table as vigorous and healthy as young olive trees. That is the Lord’s reward for those who fear him.” Psalm 128:1-4 NLT

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Resources:

Loving Our Kids On Purpose: Making a Heart to Heart Connection, by Danny Silk, Destiny Image Publishers, 2008

Getting the Best of Your Kids Before They Get the Best of You, by Dr. Kevin Lehman, Harvest House, 1992

Focus on the Family’s website: focusonthefamily.com

Raising Unselfish Children in a Self-Absorbed World, by Jill Rigby, Howard Books, 2008

Single Parenting That Works: Six Keys to Raising Happy, Healthy, Children in a Single Parent Home, by Dr. Kevin Leman, Tyndale House, 2006

The Best Yes: Making Wise Decisions in the Midst of Endless Demands, by Lysa Terkeurst

When Work and Family Collide, by Andy Stanley

The Principle of the Path: How To Get From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be, by Andy Stanley

Connect Group Questions.

1. Discuss Centerpoint's belief statement on marriage, children and family below. What does such a statement say about our priorities as a church?

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant relationship for a lifetime. Marriage is God's unique gift to provide the means for intimate companionship, for sexual expression according to Biblical standards, and for procreation of the human race. Marriage reveals to us the mysterious union which exists between Christ and His church. Children, from the moment of conception, are a gift from the Lord. Children are to honor and obey their parents. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage and model what it means to have a personal relationship with Him. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make wise choices based on Biblical truth. (Genesis 2:18-25, Psalm 127:3,139:13-16, Proverbs 6:20-23, Matthew 19:1-15, Ephesians 5:21-6:4)

2. What are your top 3 priorities? How do they impact your relationship with God? ...with your family?
3. Discuss Matthew 19:4-8, Psalm 127:3-5 and Psalm 128:1-4. How are these passages relevant today?
4. Why do you think many Christians struggle with being work-a-holics?
5. How did your parents get everything done? What challenges do parents face now that your grandparents never had to deal with?
6. Read Ephesians 5:15-17 & Psalm 90:12. Spend some time praying for each other asking God to help you make the best use of of your time.